

Message Text

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PAGE 01 OPORTO 00028 270027Z
ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMCONSUL OPORTO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1057
INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OGEN PO
SUBJ: BRIEFING BOOK FOR AMBASSADOR BLOOMFIELD

1. DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO ADD ALL OR PART OF THE FOLLOWING
INFORMATION PRINCIPALLY EXTRACTED FROM THE LATEST POST MEMO-
RANDUM FOR THE INSPECTOR GENERAL.

2. BACKGROUND: THE OPORTO CONSULAR DISTRICT COMPRISES
THE NORTHERN THIRD OF PORTUGAL CONTAINING 52 PERCENT OF THE
POPULATION AND SEVERAL THOUSAND RESIDENT AMERICANS MOSTLY
OF PORTUGUESE DESCENT. THIS POPULATION FIGURE DOES NOT INCLUDE
AN ESTIMATED HALF MILLION REFUGEES FROM FORMER OVERSEAS
PORTUGUESE POSSESSIONS WHICH STREAMED INTO THE NORTH SINCE
1975. OPORTO IS PORTUGAL'S SECOND LARGEST URBAN AREA. THE AMERICAN
CONSULATE HAS BEEN IN OPERATION SINCE 1852. IT IS CURRENTLY
CLASSIFIED AS A CONSULAR INTEREST POST AND PROVIDES A
HIGH VOLUME OF ALL CONSULAR SERVICES.

3. PERVASIVE REGIONALISM. A SALIENT FEATURE OF THE
CONTEMPORARY SCENE IN THE CONSULAR DISTRICT IS A PERVASIVE
REGIONALISM. MAJOR HISTORIC NORTH/SOUTH DIFFERENCES EXIST.

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PAGE 02 OPORTO 00028 270027Z

NORTHERN PORTUGAL IS CONSIDERED THE CRADLE OF PORT-
UGUESE CIVILIZATION WHERE THE FIRST CATHOLIC BISHOPRIC
(IN ALL IBERIA) AND FIRST CAPITAL OF PORTUGAL WERE
ESTABLISHED. IT HAS TRADITIONALLY BEEN AT ODDS WITH
LISBON AND THE SOUTH. EVENTS IN THE NORTH HAVE OFTEN SET
THE PACE FOR THE REST OF THE COUNTRY. NORTHERNERS PLACE
GREATER VALUES IN PRIVATE ENTERPRISE, INDIVIDUALISM, SMALL

LAND HOLDINGS, THE FAMILY AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH. THEY ARE MORE CONSERVATIVE AND ANTI-COMMUNIST BY CURRENT POLITICAL DEFINITION. BEFORE 1974, NORTHERNERS IN URBAN AREAS WERE CONSIDERED MORE LIBERAL AND PROGRESSIVE IN POLITICAL OUTLOOK. THE CDS AND PPD/PSD DRAW MOST OF THEIR STRENGTH FROM NORTHERN VOTERS AND SPLIT ALMOST THE ENTIRE COUNTRYSIDE VOTE EXCEPT FOR SOCIALIST PLURALITIES IN URBAN OPORTO, COIMBRA AND BRAGA. TRENDS OVER THE PAST MONTHS INDICATE A FURTHER SHIFT IN VOTER SENTIMENT TO THE RIGHT.

4. BUSINESS AND ECONOMY. THE BULK OF PORTUGUESE EXPORT PRODUCTION AND A MAJOR SHARE OF TOTAL INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION IS IN THE NORTH. BIG NORTHERN BUSINESS INTERESTS GENERALLY

VIEW LISBON AT BEST AS A NECESSARY EVIL. FOR THEM THE LEAST INTERFERENCE THE BETTER. IT IS SAID THAT ECONOMIC RECOVERY ON A NATIONAL BASIS LARGELY DEPENDS ON NORTHERN IMPETUS. THAT MAY BE SO. BUT SIDE BY SIDE WITH MODERN TEXTILE COMPANIES, PROFITABLE WINE FIRMS AND LARGE WOOD ENTERPRISES ARE AN AMAZING NUMBER OF 19TH CENTURY COTTAGE INDUSTRIES AND AN EQUALLY ARCHAIC AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY. MANY RURAL FARMS ARE ONE HALF ACRE ONE-COW OPERATIONS. THE TRAS OS MONTES (VILA REAL AND BRAGANCA) REGION IS COMMONLY REFERRED TO AS ONE OF THE POOREST IN WESTERN EUROPE AND IS STILL UNDERGOING A POPULATION DRAIN. PENNER LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 OPORTO 00028 270027Z

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